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OUR POTATO-SUPPLY.

THE potato, as an agricultural product and an article of British commerce, holds in some respects a unique position. In the monetary value of no other equally important article are there probably such fluctuations: during the past twelve months there have been variations in the price to the extent of three hundred per cent. Then, each year's supply lasts for just a year, without augmentation from old stocks, or the possibility of laying up for the future. And in regard to no other important article of diet can it be said so truly as of potatoes, that we are dependent upon our home-supply. We propose to examine these circumstances as they affect both the agriculturist and the general public.

It is to the grower rather than to the consumer that the fact of violent fluctuations in the value of potatoes chiefly appeals. The retail price of such a bulky and heavy article as potatoes is largely made up of expenses incurred subsequent to its leaving the producer's hands, and these expenses are pretty much the same from year to year. The carriage by rail or by water from the potato-growing districts to the centres of population, the cost of transference to the store, the sorting, storage, cartage, and commission for selling, form a large and nearly uniform percentage of the price which potatoes cost the consumer. The total expenses in the case of potatoes sent from such districts as Yorkshire or from Scotland to the metropolis are probably not overestimated at from thirty to forty shillings per ton. When, therefore, the price to the retailer in the London market is six pounds, the amount reaching the farmer will be about four pounds per ton. Should the price in the metropolitan market, however, fall to seventy-five shillings, the farmer will find his return reduced from eighty to thirty-five shillings per ton; thus showing that a relief of thirty-seven per cent. to the consumer implies a reduction to the farmer of fifty-six per cent. in the value of his crop. It has even happened, in the case of potatoes sent for sale to some

distance, that the selling price has been entirely swallowed up by the inevitable charges.

The great fluctuation in the value of potatoes as a farmers' crop is of course owing to the extreme uncertainty of its soundness and weight per acre one year with another. In this way, the supply in any one season may be much short of the demand, or may greatly exceed it. And importation from abroad is not to be depended upon to augment our home supply, as we shall see presently. It is, however, an unwarrantable inference to judge that the year of a plentiful and sound crop is necessarily the most profitable one for the grower. This may be illustrated by reference to the crops of the two past years. The crop of 1881 was unprecedentedly large and sound. On fairly well-managed farms it was eight to ten tons per acre of 'dressed' potatoes. The following year, on the same farms, the 'marketable ware,' owing to disease, did not probably exceed four to five tons per acre. The price per ton for crop 1881 was, however, a good deal less than half what has been realised for the produce of last year. The comparison may be shown thus:

1882—five tons per acre at eighty shillings...	L.20
1881—ten tons per acre at thirty shillings....	15
	L.5

Thus, a considerable difference in favour of the season of a meagre and diseased crop is brought out. And this is not all the advantage; for in 1881 there would be greater expense to the farmer in handling and carting the bigger crop, as well as a greater drain upon the soil's fertility. And although the smaller but diseased crop would entail more labour in the one particular of sorting, this would be more than compensated by the two or three tons per acre of diseased roots which have been left for consumption on the farm by cattle. Of course these calculations do not apply to such districts as the west of Ireland, where potatoes are not grown for sale, but rather as a staple—and in some cases, alas! almost the sole—food of those who cultivate them.

It has been said that the growing of potatoes

under present conditions is almost as uncertain as gambling. It would be less so, were the price in years of partial failure always high enough to counterbalance the want of quantity. And the risk on the other side—that is, in the case of a superabundant crop—would be diminished if there were an outlet for the roots at such a minimum price per ton as would cover expenses. But neither of these conditions at present exists. The price when sound potatoes are very scarce does not rise to such a figure as to make the saving of perhaps only two tons per acre remunerative; and sometimes even less than this weight per acre escapes the ravages of the pest. The reason why the price does not so rise is, mainly, that the potato is not considered a necessary, as in the case of bread; and so, when the price rises much above a proportionate value as compared with wheat, a substitute is found in bread.

Let us see, then, what is about the quantity of potatoes which can be consumed in the United Kingdom at a fairly remunerative price. With the information at our disposal through government returns and otherwise, it is not possible to state exactly what is an average annual supply of potatoes for the purpose of human food. We know the acreage grown, and we may with tolerable accuracy estimate the average return of sound roots per acre; but it is always uncertain how much of the crop may be used in cattle-feeding or sent to the starch manufactory. In such a year as the present, we are perhaps safe in assuming that an exceedingly small proportion of the sound roots will be used otherwise than as human food. Judging from the prices during the past winter, it may with confidence be said that the supply from crop 1882 was not equal to the demand. On the other hand, a great deal less than the crop of 1881 is all that could be disposed of at a price which would be remunerative to the grower. Of crop 1881, it is reckoned that about one million tons were exported, chiefly to America; besides this, a great quantity was consumed by cattle; and still the surplus was too large to allow the price to rise to a remunerative figure, except in the case of farms near the large centres of population, where cost of carriage was small. The British demand for this article of diet may, therefore, be said to be somewhere between the quantity grown in 1881 and that grown in 1882. Let us see what these were. (We do not reckon imports, for reasons to which we shall presently allude.) The total acreage of potatoes in the United Kingdom in these years may be stated roundly as one and a third million acres. If the marketable roots in 1881 averaged eight tons per acre, the crop of that year would be nearly eleven million tons. Deducting a million tons probably exported, and another million tons consumed by cattle, we have nine million tons as the quantity of sound potatoes available for human food of crop 1881. But from this we must deduct seed for the following year. We reckon this at only half a million tons of marketable roots; the quantity would not be enough for seed purposes; but it must be remembered that a considerable breadth is always seeded by 'seconds' (small potatoes), which are unfit for the market for food purposes. Making these deductions, we reckon the quantity of crop 1881 used for human food to have been eight and

a half million tons. This, then, may be considered the maximum quantity which the population of the Kingdom care to use even when potatoes are at their cheapest—when they can be had at the price of cattle-food.

Crop 1882, including Ireland, where disease was very prevalent, is probably not under-estimated at three tons per acre of sound marketable roots, or a total weight of four million tons. Deducting, as before, half a million tons for seed, and reckoning all the rest to be used for human food, we find the quantity to be three and a half million tons of sound roots as the food-supply from crop 1882.

From the experience, then, of the past two years, it would appear that eight and a half million tons is too large a supply for our wants—more than will bring a remunerative price to the grower; and three and a half million tons is so small an allowance, that the London price is raised much above the intrinsic value of the article, as compared with other staple food products. With wheat at eleven to twelve pounds per ton, potatoes are too dear at from seven to eight pounds per ton, judged of by their value as human nutrients. Probably, we are not far from the truth in reckoning five million tons to be the measure of the nation's annual demand. For this quantity, a fair price might be obtained by the grower.

We have not taken imports of potatoes into account in the above calculation. We find, however, that, during the past twelve years, there have been annual importations, varying from thirty-eight thousand tons in 1870—which is the smallest quantity—to nearly five hundred thousand tons in 1880, which is the largest importation during the period mentioned. It is probably safe to reckon that three-fourths of our imported potatoes are early varieties, and are used in this country between June and September, before the main portion of our own crop is ready for use. This being the case, the foreign competition in this product of our agriculture is seen to be of extremely little account. The perishable nature of potatoes makes them an indifferent article of international commerce; and more distant countries, such as the United States of America and Canada, are not likely soon to compete with us in growing potatoes. Indeed, the experience of last year would rather point to our becoming exporters of potatoes to New York. In the matter of carriage, they can be sent as cheaply from Glasgow or Liverpool to New York, as from East Lothian to Birmingham. Even with the high import duty, New York was last year found to be a profitable outlet for our surplus.

It has not yet been found profitable to raise potatoes as food for stock. The average cost of producing ten tons of potatoes would be sufficient to grow double the weight of turnips; and the latter is preferable, as costing less for labour and manure, and being more cheaply stored. It is not in cattle-feeding that farmers can hope for a profitable outlet for the potato crop, when it happens to be superabundant. The value of the potato crop as a preparation for the growth of wheat yearly diminishes as the growing of wheat is found to be itself unprofitable.

What is meantime wanted in the interest of

the farmers is the means of annually growing just such a weight of potatoes as will be sufficient for consumption on our tables. To arrive at this, two things are requisite—first, a means of stemming the ravages of the potato disease; and second, a constant supply of new varieties. This latter is the only way yet discovered of securing a full crop in adverse seasons. Were these two objects attained, a great national benefit would be the result. The number of acres devoted to this crop, for instance, might be greatly reduced. Instead of our having one million three hundred thousand acres planted, to insure the raising of an adequate supply for our requirements, it would be found that the requisite quantity (five million tons) could be grown on about one million acres. This would represent a saving, in seed alone, of about three-quarters of a million sterling. And it is a very moderate estimate to reckon the labour, manure, and rent of the three hundred thousand acres set free for other purposes, at ten pounds per acre, or three million pounds annually.

When there is a lack of potatoes, the tendency is towards a greatly increased scarcity as the season advances. There are three reasons for this. The seed-demand being generally about the same from year to year, the quantity required in spring for this purpose is a larger percentage of the available stock in a season of scarcity. Second, potatoes are of inferior keeping quality if touched by disease when still growing; and consequently, a large percentage apparently sound in autumn become tainted during the winter.

Another result to be obtained by the discovery of a cure for potato disease, would be the better quality of the roots, from their being grown only on land well suited in every respect for their cultivation. At present, the uncertainty of the crop, while it restricts the acreage on suitable soils, tends also to increase it in districts where other crops could be grown to better advantage. The great risk of failure makes the farmer of really suitable soil for the growth of potatoes cautious in determining the number of acres which he will devote to this crop. On the other hand, the chance of the considerable profits sometimes made from the crop, induces the occupier of land not well suited by its own nature or its proximity to easy means of conveyance, to risk the cultivation of this precarious root, when he would be more profitably employed in growing turnips.

ONE FALSE, BOTH FAIR; OR, A HARD KNOT.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—THE UNTYING OF THE KNOT.
'A GENTLEMAN, sir, and a lady—come up in a carriage—with another person—most anxious to see you, sir—late as it is.'

Mr Pontifex, in his Maida Hill villa, was in the habit of taking his ease, and of feeling as if he had left Black Care behind him in Lincoln's Inn. His luxurious suburban abode, with its splendid conservatory and forcing-houses; his garden, that in summer was gorgeous with colour; his fancy poultry; his fruit, that had won a prize; his pigs, that had deserved 'honourable

mention' at the Agricultural Hall—seemed sacred from intrusion. He was a widower, very fond of his daughters, and liked his ease. Of course he sometimes brought up papers with him to look over quietly in his snug study; but never had Erasmus Pontifex been plagued at Maida Hill by the visit of a client.

'What do they want, James?' demanded the master of the house, somewhat tartly. He seldom spoke petulantly to his tried and steady old servant, or, indeed, to the veriest lad who ministered to his piggeries and his pineries, for the eminent family solicitor was in domestic life indulgent. But he did feel it a little unreasonable that, at twenty minutes past eleven P.M., he should be tormented as to business.

'Foreign lady, sir, a Countess—and a gentleman, foreign, too, by the way he talks French with the lady—but it was she who asked to see you, sir—something about the great case of Lady Leominster—and the young person—very respectable—is like a young person in service,' said James, who had very probably received a sovereign from the applicants for admission, and was working out the amount of Cerberus's sop.

'Show them in!' said Mr Pontifex; and obedient James ushered in three persons—a large foreign lady, neither old nor young, handsome, richly dressed, and of a grand presence; a gentleman, also very well attired, whose sun-bronzed face and martial air might have caused him to be mistaken for a dashing and distinguished officer, had it not been for the roving, lawless look of his glittering eyes; and a prim little creature of six-and-twenty, very neat, very deferential. This, as Mr Pontifex promptly guessed, was the maid of whom James had spoken.

'We come, Mr Pontifex, on business,' said the gentleman composedly, and speaking English with a fluency that convinced the lawyer that he was confronted by a fellow-countryman. 'The Leominster case is on many tongues and on many minds just now. We are here at present to settle it.'

'To settle it!' returned Mr Pontifex, elevating his eyebrows in surprise. 'Are you aware, sir, that I act for Lady Leominster?'

'For her whom you call Miladi,' said the foreign lady.

Again Mr Pontifex arched his eyebrows. He did not much like the look of the foreign lady, fine woman as she was; nor did he feel attracted towards the male visitor, with the buccaneer's effrontery and the over-bright eyes; yet he felt it best to be civil.

'Please to be seated,' he said. 'You did not, I think, mention your names.'

'Mine is a short one—Vaughan,' was the business-like reply of the gentleman with the glittering eyes—'John Vaughan, by British law. I have often borne my mother's name. It was Rollington. She was an Honourable Miss Rollington, who married my father, a Welsh clergyman. In right of her noble birth, and by continental practice, I have called myself the Chevalier Rollington, and, as such, could be

heard of at Embassies abroad. My father was Dr Vaughan, rector of Dinas Vawr, the parish in which the castle stands. This lady is my wife. She is a Russian subject; but bears the title—which she inherits from her father, a Count of the Holy Roman Empire—of the Countess Louise de Lalouve.'

Mr Pontifex, who had been hitherto very attentive, started now, and eyed the foreign lady as he would have eyed a rattlesnake that had somehow crawled into his house.

Madame de Lalouve, who read the thoughts of the eminent family solicitor, smiled superior to this manifestation of repugnance. 'We are here, my husband and I,' she said, in her perfect English, but with that indefinable accent which betrays the foreigner, 'for business, Mr Pontifex, not for sentiment. I anticipate your objection that you act for her whom people style the Marchioness, who is so soon to be the bride of Lord Putney—of her who thrones it at Castel Vawr. But you are a good man, sir, and honest. You would not knowingly champion an impostor.'

'If you malign my noble client, Madame—there is a law of libel, Madame,' said Mr Pontifex, much flustered.

'My dear sir,' replied Chinese Jack, as his glittering eyes lit on the round dull eyes of the worthy little lawyer, and held them fascinated as is a bird by the gaze of a snake, 'have a little patience. It is because we know you by report to be incapable of bolstering up a rotten cause that we are here to-day. We want to make you see that, at the Marchbury trial, your client's case must go over like a card-castle. But, if you please, there ought first to be a pledge on your part that the Countess, my wife, shall sustain no inconvenience on account of what she may freely reveal. Shall we speak, or wish you good-night, and resume the conversation after the verdict at Marchbury, Mr Pontifex?'

Mr Pontifex said, guardedly, that so far as legal proceedings went, he should respect any confidential statement.

'In that case, Monsieur the Notary,' said Countess Louise, 'I will tell my tale, in reliance on the discretion, so well known, of him who listens. You are aware, sir, that I became acquainted with those two sisters, Miladi and Miss Carew, in Egypt, and came to England with them on board the *Cyprus*. Mademoiselle Cora, whose position was not assured, and whose thoughts were restless, envied the wealth and rank of her widowed sister. When people covet, the next step, if there be but a bold and shrewd adviser at the elbow, is often to steal. At first, timidly and vaguely, then more distinctly, Miss Carew conceived the idea of personating her sister, so unsuspecting, and of replacing her as Marchioness. The wonderful resemblance between those twin-sisters, which puzzled all, made such a task easier than you would suppose. My ambitious pupil was shy at the first—often recoiled in horror; but the bait was too tempting. And at last, at Castel Vawr, she succeeded even more easily than—'

'Succeeded! Do you mean to tell me, Madame, that you maintain the present Marchioness to be a triumphant impostor—and that—that one in Bruton Street'—cried out Mr Pontifex, ruffling up his gray hair between his outstretched fingers.

'That one in Bruton Street is Clare Carew, widow of the late Marquis of Leominster,' retorted Chinese Jack. 'The other is Miss Cora. The case lies in a nutshell. We are ready with the proofs. Here is the lady's-maid who was with the Marchioness in Egypt. Here am I, who, as I talk all languages, and wore oriental garments, was made *serang* of the lascars on board the *Cyprus*, their native boatswain having died in hospital. In that capacity I overheard the conversation on deck in which it was arranged that Miss Carew should personate her sister. But Madame here can offer the best evidence of all. Let us take things in order. Here is Miss Pinnett, formerly in Lady Leominster's service, if you please to question her. This is a sort of informal trial, after all.'

'Your name is Pinnett—what do you wish to say?' asked Mr Pontifex.

The young person of the name of Pinnett, who had been modestly seated on a chair in the background, here rose, and with a respectful air, placed on the table before the lawyer a crumpled note. 'I picked this up, sir, before daybreak,' she said, 'in Miss Carew's cabin, on the morning of the dreadful storm at sea. It is in English, as you will see, and so I could read it. It is signed L. de L. The foreign Countess wrote it, and slipped it, I suppose, into Miss Cora's hand, while most were at their tears and prayers, in the danger of the terrible night. I am a Jersey person, and had made voyages, and so was less frightened, and could take notice. I thought it was odd that Madame should ask Miss Cora to meet her on deck in such weather, so I resolved to follow Miss Cora.'

Mr Pontifex perused the brief note.—'Your handwriting?' he asked, curtly, of Madame de Lalouve.

'Certainly,' was the reply.

'Good,' said the lawyer. 'But this does not show which was which.—The witness can go on.'

'I knew the cabins from one another, sir,' said Pinnett. 'It was in Miss Carew's I found this, dropped by accident. When Miss Carew went on deck, I slipped up the stairs after her; but thought it best to remain, hiding near the cabin hatch, while Miss Cora and Madame were talking near the boat. A wild morning it was. I watched, but could not hear, being too far off, across the wet deck. Then a gentleman came up—Mr Talbot—and I saw a very small square packet hastily given by the Countess to our Miss Cora. Miss Carew hid it away. I had only time to get down below, before Miss Cora came also, on Mr Talbot's arm. He did not know her, and called her "Lady Leominster," by mistake. I did not see what was in the packet—at least, not then.'

'Stop a moment!' cried the little lawyer, now much excited, as he snatched up a sheet of paper and dipped his pen into an inkstand. 'I must make a note or two. Your name—Pinnett. Christian name, if you please, and residence.'

'Mary Ann, sir,' answered the demure young person; 'originally of Lynn, sir, in the county of Norfolk; now in service at 6 Lowndes Place, Eaton Square, with the Countess, Madame here.'

Mr Pontifex made his careful notes. 'Now, please go on,' he said. 'I think your last words

implied that on a later occasion you did find out what were the contents of the packet which you had seen handed by Madame de Lalouve to Miss Carew?'

'Certainly, sir,' answered Mary Ann Pinnett. 'In the Channel it was, the day before we landed at Southampton. I was engaged in packing the things of My Lady the Marchioness, and the things of My Lady's sister, Miss Cora Carew. Miss Cora was careless, and left the little bunch of keys—that she generally kept to herself, as well as the other keys, that, as maid in charge, were always in my keeping—lying about. So, as we servants are very inquisitive'— She hesitated here.

'Why, I suppose you peeped into Miss Cora's desk, or writing-case, eh?' demanded Mr Pontifex.

'I did, sir,' answered the unabashed hand-maiden. 'But it was in her dressing-case, of all places, as a gentleman like yourself would say, that I found what I was looking for. It was hidden, even there, in a tiny drawer, that opened with a spring, under the ivory hair-brushes; and then, there were some folded ribbons and a dried flower above it; but we servants know where and how to hunt. So there I found the packet—the same, I dare say, on my oath, that Madame gave, before my eyes, to Miss Cora.'

Mr Pontifex took his rapid notes.

'What did the packet contain?' he asked.

'A wedding-ring, sir,' answered the lady's maid.

'A wedding-ring!' was the incredulous echo of the lawyer. 'Why—how?'— And then he stared at the witness, as to his memory occurred the remembrance of a scene at Castel Vawr, when first the rival claim was made, and, in response to his own suggestion, a circlet of gold had been shown, glittering on the slender white finger of each claimant.

'A wedding-ring, sir; bright, but not new. A ring, as I should judge, rather stouter, and of a redder gold, than I ever saw before. Still, a wedding-ring it was,' answered Mary Ann.

'And you?' asked the bewildered lawyer.

'I put it back, sir, where I found it, as a poor servant should; and that is all I know, sir, concerning the packet,' replied the lady's maid.

'I gave Cora that ring,' explained Madame de Lalouve, 'with injunctions to slip it on her finger, privately, before Castel Vawr should be reached, foreseeing, as I did, that the lack of such a symbol might prejudice my pupil in popular esteem.'

'You call her your pupil, Madame,' said Mr Pontifex, putting the utmost restraint upon himself in the effort to be urbane to a woman who, in his eyes, merited the pillory and bride-well. 'Am I to understand that it was Cora Carew, or yourself, with whom this imposture originated?'

'Oh, I claim the whole merit of the conception,' was the cheerful reply of the foreign Countess; 'and yet the idea sank deep at the first into the dissatisfied mind of Mademoiselle, my dear young friend. I thought, first, in Egypt, what a pity, when two sisters were so marvellously alike, not to draw a profit from the situation,

one so rich, the other poor. At last, not without trouble and English prudery, I got hearkened to. I also got this girl Pinnett into my confidence, and engaged her to play the part which she did at Castel Vawr in identifying Miss Cora as the real Marchioness. Do you not know her again?'

Mr Pontifex lifted his eyeglass and looked at Pinnett, who seemed uneasy under his scrutiny. 'Ah! I see it now,' he said, as if speaking to himself. 'I thought I had seen her face before.'

'That was how I put my play on the stage,' continued the Countess. 'Bien! your English *ingénue* has played her part too well. She has triumphed over her sister; but she was not grateful enough to the good friend, but for whom she would never have been anything but a needy dependent. She wanted me to work for dog's wages, and so I am ready to destroy what I have built up, and to let the true Marchioness of Leominster have her own again.'

Mr Pontifex had never been shut up in a room with such a woman before. A lawyer's experience does not entitle him to consider our race as angels; but there was something shocking to him in the existence of such a person as Madame de Lalouve, daintily discoursing of her treasons, and richly dressed, instead of being a female convict, with cropped hair, in Millbank Penitentiary. But he had to swallow down—to the intense though suppressed amusement of Chinese Jack, who read most persons' thoughts, who was a man of genius as well as of resource, and who had schemes of his own maturing in that subtle brain of his—his righteous wrath, and to speak the woman fair.

'I believe, Countess,' said the lawyer, 'that you gave the ring to Miss Carew on board the *Cyprus*, and I can well fancy that I saw it produced later at Castel Vawr. But I don't see how, for practical purposes, the ring can be proved to be yours, and not that placed by the late Marquis on his young wife's finger, on the wedding-day. One ring is very like another.'

'My ring, when examined, will not be found to be like another!' replied the Sphinx, with her grave smile; 'and Miladi, at Castel Vawr, little deems that she carries about with her everywhere the proof of her guilt. When I proposed to help her, I hardly trusted her, at such a giddy height, to keep her pledge of gratitude to poor me, and so I contrived unawares to get a hold on her. The ring on her finger bears inside it my name—as a married woman—Louise Vaughan. My husband's name, as he has told you, is Vaughan.'

In all horror and consternation, Mr Pontifex sprang from his chair, ruffling up his hair again with his fingers and frowning as he bit his lip. How he wished that he had never been brought into such company, never mixed up in such a business as this. Calming down his nerves, he said, in a tone of civil incredulity: 'I am afraid you will not establish your point, Madame. It is easy to buy a wedding-ring. Miss Carew, who must long since have discovered the existence of this compromising inscription upon hers, has doubtless exchanged it for a safer substitute.'

Madame de Lalouve smiled as weightily as before. 'She is ignorant, Monsieur, that she

carries Nemesis along with her,' she said; 'nor, without the aid of a strong magnifier, can those tiny letters be read. A competent examiner would find that my statement is exact.'

'But I cannot go to Castel Vawr, or to Bruton Street, to ask a lady for a ring off her finger, for such a purpose!' exclaimed the excited lawyer. 'I should wish for some confirmatory evidence to back the assertion.'

'For that objection, Mr Pontifex, I was prepared,' said Chinese Jack, with cheerful promptitude; 'and indeed, since I saw the fictitious Marchioness yonder at the Mountain Picnic, in the shadow of Combe Dhu, I have been busy in providing such evidence. I have been over to Paris, where, in the Chapel of the Russian Embassy, the Countess and I were married, and have hunted up the jeweller who caused to be made, by my orders, the ring in question. It cost some perseverance and some tact to get worthy M. Aristide Bonchamp, of the Rue de Rivoli, to rummage through his old daybooks and ledgers until he found the entries of this particular purchase. Then, to make all safe, I had to unearth the skilful workman who was the actual artificer of the ring; and this was the harder, because the man, implicated in the revolt of the Commune, had but recently returned to Paris from exile in England, after the armistice, and was working for another employer. But here I have, as you see, sir, a formal certificate, signed by M. A. Bonchamp, countersigned by his principal *commis*, who perfectly remembered the transaction, and witnessed by the Secretary to the *Mairie* of the *arrondissement*, and, as such, stamped with the official seal. Here, too, is the written testimony of the workman, Jules Pécher, who engraved the microscopic characters inside the ring. It is attested, as you see, by a notary public of the city of Paris, 12 Boulevard Malesherbes. Read these, Mr Pontifex, as carefully as you please, and test my statements by any inquiries your experience may suggest,' said Chinese Jack in conclusion, as he handed over the documents to the lawyer.

'Dear me—dear me!' muttered Mr Pontifex, as he glanced again and again at the papers before him. 'This is—very nearly conclusive, I should say. I have been cruelly deceived, and made a most unwitting instrument in the infliction of such a wrong as, till now, I never dreamed of!'

(To be concluded next month.)

A TALE OF THE PRESSGANG.

ABOUT one hundred years ago, 'when George the Third was king,' England stood alone against the world. On the one hand she was fighting with America, then struggling for independence; and on the other hand with France, Spain, and Holland; while Russia, Sweden, and Denmark had formed an armed neutrality secretly hostile to her. In such an emergency, special effort was necessary to sustain the marine service. The volunteer supply failed to meet the demand for able-bodied seamen, and impressment had to be resorted to. At ordinary times, men of certain callings were exempt from seizure; but at a time like this, almost any man, if strong in body and

mind, was liable to be seized by the pressgang, and forced to serve in His Majesty's ships of war.

During this period, Elias John Eveson, a stout Yorkshire lad of eighteen years, then studying law in London, was one evening strolling through that part of the city between Ludgate Hill and the Thames, in company with a young friend whom we will call Wilson, his real name having been forgotten. While the two boys loitered and chatted, a sudden commotion arose in the street, and men ran hurriedly by, shouting in friendly warning: 'Run, lads; the gang's coming.' Turning round, they saw a gang of soldiers approaching rapidly, and evidently intending their capture. The boys dashed off at full speed; but being unfamiliar with the locality, they ran unknowingly into a blind alley, and were there seized by their pursuers. They fought stoutly to get away, but to no purpose, except to exhaust themselves and get some hard knocks, their captors being too many and too strong for them. They were taken to a 'rendezvous,' locked up for the night under guard, and next morning carried by main force aboard His Majesty's ship *Panther*, lying off Sheerness, ready to sail for America as soon as her full complement of hands should be aboard. Worn out by a sleepless night, spent in sorrow and rage, irritated by the rough treatment they received, being handcuffed and hustled along like dogs, and suffering from their bruises besides, it was in no pleasant temper that Eveson and Wilson met the captain of the *Panther* when he came forward to see his forced recruits. He looked with delight at Eveson, who was of striking appearance, large, powerfully built, keen-eyed, big-nosed, curly-headed, and just then the very personification of fury.

'Well, my men,' said the captain, 'I hope you have made up your minds to serve your country and your king like true Britons. We are going to thrash the Yankees, you know.'

'Sir,' replied Eveson, 'after this experience of English law and English justice, be assured that I shall never lift a hand in England's defence. Rather will I assist the "Yankees," as you term men nobly determined to throw off her galling yoke.'

'But, my lad,' returned the captain, 'you cannot help yourself. You must serve whether or not.'

'Never!' said Eveson. 'So long as you succeed in keeping me aboard this ship, so long, to avoid contention, will I obey you. But—and lay this to heart—I will never fight for England. And I shall leave this ship at the first land we touch.'

'You intend to desert?'

'I intend to desert.'

'You know that the penalty is hanging?'

'Rather will I hang under unjust law, than serve by my arm to enforce that law in a God-freed land.'

'Tut, tut! Little pot soon hot,' contemptuously remarked the captain, used to such language from angry impressed men. 'We'll make a brave soldier of you yet, my man,' he said as he turned away.

'Little pot soon hot!' The contemptuous words burned into Eveson's soul like fire. Torn away from home and friends, from his beloved

studies and fair prospects, brought by force to a war-ship, where daily toil and the ultimate horrors of war awaited him, and sneered at in this situation for the expression of natural feelings! Soon hot, indeed, but slow to cool, Eveson's temper rose till he felt like murder. But seeing that remonstrance and resistance were alike useless, and would probably bring further indignity on him, he wisely controlled himself, and determined to make the best of circumstances, or to seem to, at anyrate.

As a volunteer, Eveson felt that it would have been his proudest duty to serve his country. But to serve as a slave, as a mercenary, he never could; no honour lay that way. A gentleman by birth and education, the knowledge that the lash would punish his insubordination or neglect of duty, galled him to the quick. One touch of that lash, he well knew, would bring red murder to his heart and to his hand; so, in proud self-control, he took up his menial duty, and performed it faithfully, that no occasion of reproof or punishment might be found against him. Strong as a lion and active as a cat, he soon led the ship's crew. Intelligent and respectful in his bearing, he gained the esteem and confidence of the officers. The captain, deceived by this apparent submission, congratulated himself on having read Eveson's character so well, and marked him for promotion.

After ten weary weeks of storm and hardship, all hearts beat high with pleasure when 'Land, ho!' was shouted by the lookout man at the masthead. Eyes sparkled with interest and glistened with tears at first sight of the dusky cedar-clothed Bermuda islets, lying low in the Atlantic's broad bosom. Land indeed lay again before them, but it was not motherland. And who knew, in the chances of the coming war, whether their eyes should ever again behold Old England's shores! As the *Panther* neared St George's Harbour under the careful guidance of a black pilot, all hands crowded on deck. A little apart from the rest stood Eveson, his eye bent on the coast with a keener interest than any knew. To him, Bermuda was a land of hope, a country where he might regain liberty. Looking with a purpose, his eye found what it sought. He knew that the islands were of coral formation, the limestone rock, therefore, to be probably friable by tides and waves. With this knowledge, he looked for what no one else looked for, he found what no one else noticed—caves in the sea-wall. Seeing the means of escape, his heart was like a furnace. But when the captain approached, tapping him on the shoulder, his face was like a stone, giving no sign of the feelings that burned within.

'Well, Eveson,' said the captain cheerily, 'glad to see land again!'

'It is not my land, sir,' replied Eveson.

'You will not care to desert just here then,' said the captain, referring to the resolve Eveson had expressed on the day of his impressment.

To this the lad made no reply.

'Sulky still, eh?' laughed the captain as he walked away. 'Have a care, lad; the harbour is full of sharks.'

'Sulky!' muttered Eveson to himself. 'Yes, old boy; sulky, if you like. And something more determined!'

For a day or two after their arrival, no opportunity of escape offered. Strict watch kept by men on the ship and by sharks in the water prevented even an attempt. Eveson resolved to wait if necessary until the last night of their stay, and then, if nothing better offered, to risk the sharks, and try to swim ashore. But on the third day, the governor of Bermuda, George James Bruere, came aboard to dine with the captain of the *Panther*. In the bustle and excitement of the occasion, Eveson found his opportunity. Late in the evening, when the short twilight of latitude thirty-two degrees was quickly fading, a negro came aboard with fresh fruit, grapes, peaches, pomegranates, bananas, oranges, &c., gathered specially for the feast. Sambo took his baskets to the steward's room, and being of an inquiring turn of mind, and desirous of tasting the good things he knew to be in course of preparation, he delayed his departure. Amused by his unfamiliar blackness and by his negro comicality of speech, the steward allowed Sambo to remain and assist him in his trying duties. Meanwhile, twilight deepened, swift darkness descended, and on the waves beside the great ship the black man's little cedar boat bobbed pleasantly.

Now two figures crept stealthily along the bulwarks, dodging and stooping whenever the watch turned their way. Quietly the two figures slipped over the ship's side, softly they dropped into the little boat bobbing about there so pleasantly, noiselessly they untied the painter, and pushing off, let the sea bear them where it would until they were a little distance from the ship. Then, muffling the oars with handkerchiefs, they pulled steadily away, between St David's and Songbird islands, through Castle Harbour, and then far along the south shore of Main Island.

Aboard the *Panther*, the black man still delayed his departure, and merriment still went on. When, at last, Sambo sought his boat and found it not, the desertion was discovered. It was then too dark and too late to go in search; but the captain vowed that in the morning the deserters should swing from the yardarm, and afterwards be thrown to the sharks. The governor on his return to his house gave orders for the military to go in search of the truants at daybreak.

The two young men pulled along shore until their strength gave out; they then landed, almost at hazard, for in the darkness there could be little choice. Setting their little boat adrift, lest it might betray them, they sat down on the beach, wishing earnestly for the day. When morning dawned, they anxiously used the first gray light to seek a hiding-place, knowing well, that if not quickly concealed, a few short hours might suddenly and cruelly end life for them! Cedar-woods there were in plenty; but the friends dared not trust to concealment among their sparse foliage and scanty underbrush. White houses gleamed ghostly through the trees, but they might be the residences of military officers. These would not do. The caves must be their refuge, if a cave could be found.

Looking around, they saw that they were in a little cove, from which the shore stretched away on each hand irregular and broken. This broken coast was what Eveson desired; it

promised a refuge. They left the cove, crawling low among the rocks, and within twenty yards found the object of their search—a cave in the sea-wall. At low tide, its entrance was not more than four feet high; at full tide, it would be unnoticeable. It was, moreover, concealed from the cove by a jutting rock. Inside, they found it, if not comfortable, still to be preferred for a time to either the deck or the yardarm of the *Panther*.

The beauty of the cave was such as almost to engross the attention even in that anxious hour. Stalactites hung pendent from the roof; stalagmites of curious shapes were grouped about the floor, and leaned like human figures against the walls. With the first ray of sunlight, crystals flashed with innumerable sparkles on all sides. In pools at their feet, many-coloured seaweeds gleamed in the perfectly translucent water, and curious-looking fishes moved lazily about. Ferns wreathed the mouth of their cave, and framed for their delight a bit of the brilliant blue sea. Altogether, the fugitives were well satisfied with their retreat. They had wisely stowed away a little 'hard-tack' in their pockets, and never did they breakfast with heartier appetites than on this morning. Then they lay down on shelves of rock near the mouth of the cave, watched the blue waves for a while, and soon fell fast asleep.

Late in the day they slept, until awakened by a sound that stilled the beating of their hearts, and brought mortal paleness to their cheeks. Overhead, they heard the measured tramp of soldiery. The military were out after them! The terrified lads crept softly from their perches, and crawled away into the farthest recesses of the cave. Every house in the neighbourhood and in the islands, they afterwards found, was searched on that day. Every possible place of refuge known to them was thoroughly hunted by the soldiers and marines. Doubtless, many Bermudians thought of the caves—they certainly knew of their existence; but no hint of such knowledge passed their lips in all the search. So, presently, the boys heard again the tramp, tramp of soldiers marching, but this time away from them. The fact that the road lay along shore and passed directly over their cave, was at the same time a comfort and a misery to the poor refugees; it increased the chances of capture, but it was a safeguard against surprise.

The rest of that day passed in watchfulness and fear. The night was not so tiresome; for in the darkness they left the cave and took a little cautious exercise along the shore. By the next morning they were both hungry and thirsty; but their biscuit was all eaten, and water was not to be had. And in the afternoon a storm came up, which made the cave very unpleasant to live in. Cold, damp, hungry, thirsty, John Eveson now had need of all his spirit to sustain his courage and to cheer his fainting companion. On the morning of the fourth day, as Eveson was peering wearily from the mouth of the cave, he saw, in the little cove close by, a coloured girl getting sand in a calabash. One look at her honest black face convinced Eveson, who was quick at reading character, that he would be quite safe in trusting his life with her. A soft whistle drew her attention. Hearing it repeated, she looked earnestly about to discover its origin, and spied the haggard

face framed in the dark sea-wall. Understanding at once—for her owner's house had been searched for the fugitives—the girl made a signal of caution, and walked slowly towards the cave, gathering sand and shells as she went. When near enough, she stopped, looked carefully about to be sure that no one was within hearing, and said quickly: 'To-night I bring you bread and drink. Wait.'

That day passed slowly and wearily to the fugitives. But, as the slow hours moved on, hope brightened, and brought a feeling of rest in assurance of succour. The evening hours crept by with leaden feet; midnight came; the night grew late; hope almost died out; bitter disappointment began to be felt, and the gloom of despair seemed to settle in that dark and lonely cave. Then along the road again, at that late hour, came the tramp, tramp of soldiers marching. Oh, the agony of that moment! The black girl had surely betrayed them! Nearer, nearer, came the steps. Overhead now! Are they stopping? Are they passing? Hark! A halt; a silence; swift words of command; then feet scattering in all directions for a midnight search among the houses clustered about the cove. Again the feet assemble. The hunters stand in council, and their feet seem to press like death on two labouring hearts below. Have the soldiers heard of the cave? and will they now seek it? The debate ceases overhead; the steps move again. On? Yes; thank God, yes!

'Forward! March!' On, still on! and the steps die away in the distance. In the cave, two stifled hearts are released from an awful pressure; two worn faces are raised in the darkness; tears flow down wasted cheeks, and sobs convulse wearied bodies as two saved lads offer thanksgiving to heaven. The soft drip of trickling water, the murmurous splash of little wavelets, alone mingle with their midnight orisons. But soon a figure darkened the entrance to the cave, and a soft voice crept along the air. 'Massa, massa! you dar? I bring you someting to eat. God bress you, pore massa!' and tender-hearted black Miriam wept for the sufferings of the fugitives, who devoured so hungrily the food she had brought them. Mats to ease their weary bones she brought them too, and comfort and hope.

She had received early intelligence of the midnight raid of search, and had had to remain quietly in bed until it was over. But the danger was now surely passed, she said, and the *Panther* was to leave in a day or two. In the meantime, they must eat and sleep, and she would care for them.

For four days longer the prisoners lay in their cave, but comparatively comfortable, and almost happy; then the *Panther* sailed away. Mrs Plaice, Miriam's owner and mistress, had them brought to her house, and kept concealed there until the search for them had quite died out and was forgotten. Then, when Eveson fell sick of a low fever, brought on by his sojourn in the damp cave, the natural conclusion of such romantic adventures followed quite easily. His hostess, a very young widow, 'loved him for the dangers he had passed, and he loved her that she did pity them.' On his recovery, he married his fair preserver, and contentedly settled down in Bermuda.

When the news went round that Mrs Plaice had married the young Englishman who had recently come to Bermuda to open a school for gentlemen's sons, the brightest gossip never fancied any connection between the dignified young scholar and the Jack-tar who had deserted from the *Panther*. The sharks had surely eaten poor Jack ; but just how or when Mr Eveson came to Bermuda, no one knew.

Faithful Miriam had her reward. She was tenderly cared for by Eveson while he lived, and when he died, was left by him as a most precious legacy to his daughter. She was offered her freedom in 1834, when the emancipation of slaves took place, but refused it with scorn. She remained with her mistress for the rest of her days, and died in her arms at the last, at a good old age.

It is not known what became of Wilson.

POOR LITTLE LIFE.

IX.

THERE was much sympathy shown Mrs Durham by all 'the dwellers in the plains,' when it was known that her nephew was 'down with fever.' The young baronet was popular with all that pleasant society ; moreover, he was the hero of a little domestic romance. Above all, he was a baronet, and titles have always had their value in the colonies. The Governor sent daily to inquire for him ; so also did the Chief Justice and the Colonial Secretary, and in fact everybody who either had made, or hoped in future to make, his acquaintance. At first, there was every appearance of its being only a slight attack.

'One never likes to prophesy unless one's sure,' said Dr Samuelson after he had paid two or three visits ; 'but I fancy it's just his acclimatising touch of country fever. I hope it mayn't turn into anything worse ; I don't think it will. There's no yellow-fever going about— to speak off. All the same, I don't think it is wise of Miss Durham to be so much in her cousin's room. She sits by his bedside for hours. I think, Mrs Durham, you should persuade her to let old Nana do a good deal for him, that she insists upon doing herself. The atmosphere of a sick-room is not the best for a young and delicate girl.'

But Evelyn would listen to no such counsels. 'You need not be afraid for me, doctor,' she replied ; 'I'm not a fever subject. I've been two years in Jamaica without having had a day's illness.—You remember, mother, the year before last, when yellow-fever was so bad all over the plains, and even the negroes were taking it, I never had so much as a headache.—I'm a true Creole, doctor ; I'm perfectly climate-proof. Don't be afraid.'

'All the same, Miss Durham, don't rush recklessly into danger,' he answered.

'No, indeed ; I sha'n't. But Sir George is a bad patient. I don't believe he would take the medicines you order him, if it were not for me. It needs all my coaxing and influence to get him to swallow all the horrible things you give him. And he feels the heat so much, he requires constant watching, to prevent him from catching cold.'

'Ah well,' said the doctor ; 'since it must be so, I shall say no more.'

'Dr Samuelson says you are getting on nicely, George,' she said, when she had returned to her post at her cousin's bedside. 'He does not think it is going to be a bad attack. There's no fever going about just now. What do you think he told me ? The Kingston papers are publishing daily bulletins about your illness ! Whenever he gets back to his surgery, he finds a reporter waiting to hear the latest intelligence. See what it is to be a favourite and a baronet, George !'

He put his hand within hers.

'No ; put your hand within the clothes immediately,' she said, 'or I'll go away and leave you. The doctor is trying to get your skin to act, and there you go doing your best to keep yourself from getting well !'

He drew in his hand at once. 'No ; don't go !' he said. 'I'll do anything you want me ; only don't go and leave me. O Evelyn !' he continued, 'I don't think I could ever get better without you. You don't know how I dread the nights, when Nana takes your place, and how I long for the daylight to see you again !'

'Don't be foolish, George,' she said. 'Of course, I can't be with you always. But'— And then she blushed a rosy blush. But she left her sentence unfinished.

'But it's quite true, Evelyn,' said George, not noticing her confusion. 'I really don't think I could get better if you were to go and leave me. And even with your nursing, my darling, I feel so ill sometimes, that I fear I may never recover. Evelyn, if I die ?'

'O hush !' she said. 'Don't talk nonsense, George. You're no more going to die than I am. We're both of us going to be married in spring, and live a hundred years at the very least. We're very near the end of the third volume now. You know all novels end with a marriage and "they lived happily ever afterwards."—And when we're married,' she continued, still trying to amuse him, 'O George, think how delightful it will be when we're married ! We'll come out to Jamaica every year, won't we, dear ? and spend our Christmas at Prospect Gardens ! And mother will give us a ball'— She stopped short suddenly. 'Ah ! that reminds me. I wonder if mother has sent out notices putting off the one we were to have had on Christmas Day ? Let me see. This is the 19th. If she has not, there's no time to be lost. If you'll spare me for a moment, George, I'll run and ask her.' She left the room, but returned almost immediately, saying it was all right. Her mother had written the moment George's illness had declared itself.

'But it's only postponed,' added Evelyn gaily. 'Now, do get better quickly, like a dear boy, and let us have our dance before we go to England.'

But a day or two afterwards, George's fever took an unfavourable turn.

'Massa Garge dead for true !' said old Nana, clasping her withered hands, when the first symptoms of the fatal black-vomit made their appearance. 'It yellow Jack. O my poor Missy ! An' him such a beautiful buckra too ;' and seizing Evelyn's hand, she covered it with tears and kisses.

Dr Samuelson was hastily sent for, and arrived only to confirm the terrible news.

'I'm afraid it is yellow-fever,' he said, shaking his head gravely. 'Don't lose hope, dear Mrs Durham. I've seen cases as bad as this in which the patient has recovered. Sir George has an excellent constitution. We must hope for the best. In the meantime, we must try to fight against that unnatural drowsiness. That sleepiness is the first stage of coma, and if coma ensues—' The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

'I am going to sit up with him to-night, mother,' said Evelyn, when the doctor had taken his departure. 'Nana can lie down on the pallet at the foot of his bed, if she likes. But Nana is getting old, and if anything—her voice trembled—'if anything was to happen to him, I should never forgive myself!—No, mother!' she continued, seeing her mother was about to speak; 'there is no use trying to dissuade me. My mind is made up. If George dies—' She burst into a flood of tears.

'Miss Ebelyn!' said Nana, entering the apartment, 'Massa Garge would like speak wid you. Him cry him head pain him so.'

'Tell him, Nana, I'm coming directly. Get a fresh ice-bag ready, and take it into his room. You might take my dressing-gown with you too, Nana! I'm going to help you to nurse him to-night.—It's nearly ten o'clock now, mother dear, so I'd better say good-night.—If he's better to-morrow morning,' she whispered in her mother's ear as she kissed her, 'it will be all right yet. It's the ninth day, you know. Good-night, dearest mother; and don't forget us both,' she added softly, 'in your prayers.'

X.

Towards morning, the patient fell into a gentle slumber—a slumber which old Nana's experienced eye at once detected as being different from the drowsiness which had occasioned so much anxiety; and when, shortly after daylight, Dr Samuelson entered the sick-room, he saw at a glance that the crisis was past.

'He owes his life, under God, to you, Miss Durham!' said the doctor, addressing Evelyn. 'There are influences in this world more subtle than medicine— influences both to kill and to cure. Yours is one of the latter. I believe your mere presence in the sick-chamber has done him more good than all the resources of my art. But—' He stopped short suddenly. 'Let me feel your pulse,' he said to the girl, looking her in the face. 'I think you had better go and lie down, Miss Evelyn. You've overtaxed your strength, I'm afraid. You can leave Sir George to Nana with perfect confidence now. The worst is over. Go and lie down as quickly as possible. I'll bring you something to take, the moment I hear you are in your bed.'

Evelyn stooped down and kissed her sleeping cousin, and turned towards the door. Then returning, she kissed him once more. But as she was leaving the room, she reeled, and put her hand to her head. Dr Samuelson sprang forward just in time to save her from falling.

'Take Miss Durham and put her to bed at once!' he said to the old nurse with an air of authority. 'And ask Mrs Durham to go down and sit beside her till I come.'

Just then, George opened his eyes. 'Evelyn!' he cried in a feeble voice.

'Good-morning, Sir George!' said the doctor cheerfully, advancing to the bedside. 'How are you this morning? Better, I am sure?' laying his fingers on his pulse.

George shook his head. 'I think not, doctor. I feel so weak, weaker than I have done yet. I feel as if I could hardly raise my hand.—Where is Miss Durham? Where is Evelyn?'

'A good sign,' said Dr Samuelson; 'none better. You can't expect to feel particularly strong, after so sharp a touch of fever. But you'll do now, Sir George; you're on the right road now.'

'Where is my cousin, doctor? She was with me all night.'

'Miss Evelyn? Oh, she's gone to lie down for a little; she's a little tired with being up all night. I've sent her to try to get a sleep. You must try to do without her to-day, Sir George. A young lady's strength is not so great as that of an old nigger's, and I think she's been overtaxing her powers these last few days.'

'Is she ill, doctor?' said the patient, trying to raise himself in his bed.

'Lie down; pray, be still, my dear Sir George! You'll never get better unless you try to keep calm. No, no; not ill. Miss Evelyn's not ill—only a little over-fatigued, you know. A good sleep will put her all right.—Oh, here's Nana!—Nana, stay with Sir George till I return. I'm going up-stairs to write a prescription. Meantime, you can give our patient a little of that jelly.—You must try and take some nourishment now—not too much at first, you know.' And nodding cheerfully to his patient, he left the room.

The morning passed; the noontide came and went, but no Evelyn came to cheer the sick-man with her gracious presence.

It struck George, as he lay there wearying for her coming, that never since the commencement of his illness had he received so little attention. Nana seemed constantly leaving the room; and once when she returned, he fancied he saw the marks of recent tears on her worn and wrinkled countenance. The doctor's visits were fewer and shorter than ever. As for his aunt, she looked in only once during the day, staying only a few minutes. In answer to his inquiries about her daughter, she said Evelyn was still in bed; and then, making some excuse, she hurriedly left the apartment.

He passed a miserable day. He could not understand why his betrothed stayed away. He felt hurt—deeply hurt—at her treatment of him. And why, if he was getting better, did every one shun his chamber? Above all, why was he left alone so often and so long?

Not even from Dr Samuelson, when he came to pay his evening visit, did he obtain the satisfaction or the information that he desired. The doctor was hurried, grave, and taciturn. He told George he was going on nicely. But when he asked for Evelyn, he evaded saying anything about her, by telling him he had not seen her yet. Then, bidding George a hasty good-night, he left him alone with Nana.

The night passed somehow. But to George it was a night both of uneasiness and mystery. It seemed to his fevered imagination as if something

unusual was going on. There were noises for ever on the stairs, in the room above him, in the piazzas. There were lights constantly passing and repassing across the courtyard. At times, he thought he caught the sound of muffled sobs. Once—it was just about second cockcrow—he was certain he heard a woman's despairing scream.

It was late before he slept, and when he did sleep, it was a troubled uneasy slumber, broken by dreams like the visions of a nightmare—a sleep which gave him no refreshment, and brought with it no solace. Towards morning, he awoke with a start. To his great surprise, he found that he was alone in the room—even old Nana had deserted him. He could not understand it. What did it all mean? But he was too drowsy to be able to reason out the matter. He turned over to the other side, and in five minutes after, he was asleep again.

When he next awoke, it was broad daylight. It was Christmas morning—Evelyn's birthday. The birds were singing in the trees; the sunlight was pouring in through the jalousies of his chamber. All was quiet, tranquil, and still. A Christmas feeling seemed to pervade all nature. In fancy, he almost heard the angelic voices singing,

Peace on earth and good-will to men.

As he lay there, revelling in the light and the joy and the sunshine, the door opened softly, and Mrs Durham appeared. She was clad in a long white dressing-gown. Her face was very pale, and there were deep blue circles round her eyes, which spoke of a night of watching, perhaps of weeping.

'Aunt!' said George, as she approached his bedside, 'what brings you here at this hour of the morning?—How is Evelyn?' he said, without pausing for a reply, for something in her face excited his gravest apprehensions.

'Better, dear,' she replied, in the calm, low voice which was habitual to her. 'Better—much better, now.'

'Is she up yet? It is her birthday! Shall I see her soon?'

'No; you can't see her, George,' she answered with an almost imperceptible tremor in her voice. 'But she sends you this, and her dearest love, and wishes you a happy Christmas and many of them.' She bent down and kissed him on his brow, and placed a little Prayer-book in his hand.

He took it, half-awed, half-wondering at her manner, and as he opened it, there fell out a lock of Evelyn's auburn hair. 'It is Evelyn's Prayer-book, and this is her hair,' said her nephew. 'What does it all mean, aunt?'

For only answer, the bereaved mother fell on her knees by his bed in an agony of tears.

In the little churchyard of Halfway Tree, close to the gateway where the gentry congregate after service on Sundays, whilst waiting for their carriages, half-hidden amongst the profuse growth of flowers and greenery which surrounds it, stands a pure white marble cross, which marks the grave of a young girl. Years have passed since that poor little life found its last resting-place in that quiet grave. But any one who is

curious may yet read the inscription upon it. It is this:

EVELYN DURHAM
Went to her rest on the 18th anniversary
of her birthday.

John xv. 13th verse.

THE MONTH:
SCIENCE AND ARTS.

MR SAMUEL PLIMSOLL, the sailor's friend, has in a letter to the *Times* pointed out that whilst British capitalists are ready enough to risk their money in ventures far away in distant lands, they have overlooked that at their very doors is what may be called 'a gold mine of unparalleled richness, and which is quite inexhaustible.' He alludes to the harvest of the sea. He maintains that if a Company were formed to work two or three fleets of well-appointed fishing-boats—to reap this harvest, which requires neither ploughing nor sowing—the financial result would be of a very favourable character. This letter has naturally called forth others. One in particular, from a smack-owner, points out that fishing is not nearly so profitable as Mr Plimsoll represents, nor as it has been in past years. He says that the suggested Company would have no need to build new vessels, because there are owners in every fishing-town who would be only too glad to part with theirs and to forsake the business. He also maintains that there is a very decided limit to the supply of fish, and that the numbers netted are getting less year by year. Let us now see what a good authority can tell us with regard to this question of illimitable supply. In his opening lecture at the Fisheries Exhibition, London, Professor Huxley told his hearers that an acre of sea is more productive of food than an acre of land, and that he had no doubt that many fisheries were quite inexhaustible. Salmon, it is true, will quickly be extirpated from a river, unless persons are compelled by law to fish under certain conditions. But if we turn to the great sea-fisheries, the case is altered. He believed that the cod, herring, pilchard, mackerel, and similar fisheries were inexhaustible, and were entirely beyond the control of man either to diminish the number of fish or to increase them by cultivation.

The Fisheries Exhibition has been so wonderfully successful, that there is some talk of its remaining open for some weeks longer than the prescribed time. When it eventually closes, a great many of its treasures will no doubt find a permanent home in the new Natural History Museum close by. Among the many ingenious life-saving appliances shown, there is one worthy of special notice, because of its great novelty. We allude to the Greenway Breakwater. This is of course only shown in model; but it is very different in aspect and general arrangement from the solid mass of masonry which is generally associated with the word breakwater. It consists simply of a number of diamond-shaped pontoons, which are moored in a line at regular distances

from one another, and so placed that an advancing wave will strike on the pointed edges presented to it. By this means, a wave is divided into two parts, which meet between each pontoon, and expend their momentum upon one another, leaving the water quite calm within the line of pontoons. Among the advantages claimed for this invention are the following: It costs less than any other form of breakwater; it is portable, and can be readily constructed; it causes no accumulation of silt; and it can be placed in position in situations where the construction of more solid erections would be next to impossible.

The transmission of money by means of postal notes has proved so great a convenience to all classes, that any plan by which it may be improved is worthy of attention. Perhaps our authorities will borrow a hint from the American system now being established. Instead of the notes being for fixed amounts, which with us represents a great inconvenience, the exact sum required is stamped upon them by the postmaster at the time of issue; and to prevent fraud, the stamping is in perforated figures. Thus, supposing a note were required for two pounds eight shillings and fourpence—that amount, plus the commission, would be handed to the postmaster; and in exchange, the applicant would receive the note perforated with the three figures 2 8 4 in spaces provided for their reception.

There are current numerous stories of persons who have been struck by lightning finding impressed upon their bodies figures of trees and other objects, having apparent reference to the surrounding landscape. Mr Burt, the editor of a paper published at the Summit-house, Mount Washington, records a painful experience bearing upon this mysterious and interesting subject. While sitting in his office during a thunderstorm, he was struck by lightning, thrown from his chair, and felt at the same time the sensation of a tremendous blow on the back. Upon afterwards recovering himself, and submitting to an examination, it was found that his back exhibited numerous tree-like markings, which might, by any one fond of the marvellous, be easily transformed into picture. But Mr Burt is not so ready to accept such a view of the matter. He says: 'As there are no trees upon Mount Washington, it seems to me that the peculiar appearance must be the result of the blood settling in the smaller vessels.'

The Aërial Navigation Company of Chicago—although its title would seem better adapted for the pages of romance than for this matter-of-fact world—has actually been incorporated. It has been formed to manufacture and employ balloons for commercial purposes of a pattern which was exhibited and experimented upon some few years back at Hartford, Connecticut. There was nothing very novel about this machine. It consisted of a horizontal cylindrical vessel to hold the gas, and an attached framework with vertical and horizontal propellers. On a calm day, its inventor was able to take a short flight and to return to his starting-point. But he failed on another occasion to sail in any direction than that in which the wind forced him to go. Possibly the year which marks the centenary of the first balloon ascent—just celebrated with great éclat in France—has been chosen as a fitting one to start such

an enterprise. Its promoters may find it easier to float a Company than to float—and guide their aerial ships.

A very interesting inquiry into the origin of the vast deposits of amber found in Prussia has lately been made by Messrs Goeppert and Mengen. It is believed that at one time there must have existed in this part of Europe examples of all the conifers known, and that the amber is the result of generations of these resinous trees. The best deposits are between Memel and Danzig, and are worked by quarrying at a depth of about eighty to one hundred feet below the surface of the ground. The amount of amber so obtained is about five times that which is washed up by the Baltic. But hitherto, the bed of that ocean has been considered to be the chief source of supply.

Some of our leading agriculturists have from time to time advocated the sub-irrigation system, which, as its name implies, means the application of water to the soil from below, instead of from above. Although at first sight this plan seems contrary to nature, it has been found most successful in practice. Two agriculturists in California have lately adopted the system with marked success, and a description of the means employed will be of interest to many. First of all, trenches are dug in the soil to be treated; these are seven feet apart and eighteen inches deep. In these trenches are laid pipes made of cement, and at intervals there are holes in the pipe, each fitted with a perforated plug. The ends of these pipes are in communication with the water-supply. When the pipes are once laid, the trenches are filled in, and the field exhibits no sign that it differs from ordinary ground. In one case, an orchard of one hundred and fifty acres gave such an increased product that it paid the cost of the extra work in one year.

The most terrible catastrophe of the kind which has occurred since the earthquake of Lisbon is that which in July last laid Casamicciola in ruins and buried between four and five thousand of its inhabitants. The first accounts told us that the event was as sudden as it was unexpected, and that no warnings of the coming disaster were made evident to the doomed town. But from reports now made by Professor Rossi, who stands in much the same relation to the city of Rome as the head of our Meteorological Society does to London, it is seen that warnings of unusual subterranean activity were both abundant and frequent for some days before the dreadful crisis; and that these signs of disturbance were not confined to the island of Ischia, but were common to the adjoining continent, and were noted in the observatory at Rome. They consisted of slight shocks of earthquake, considerable diminution in the water-supply both at the wells and the sulphur springs, whilst water at one place usually cold, issued from the earth in a boiling condition. Only two years ago, similar phenomena preceded the earthquake which then wrecked this unfortunate Casamicciola. It would seem to us that after such terrible lessons, the Italians would organise some system of earthquake warnings, on the plan of those storm-warnings which other nations are doing their best to bring to perfection. Professor Rossi suggested such a course after the occurrence of the first disaster at Casamicciola, recommending

that several places, including the island of Ischia, should be embraced in a telegraphic network, with its chief office at Rome. This advice was unheeded, and there is too much reason to fear that human selfishness of the grossest description was the cause. Like our own seaside resorts, the island of Ischia and many other places like it are dependent upon the harvest which can be gathered during the season from tourists. Now, if earthquake warnings were issued, these tourists would on the first alarm forsake their hotels and seek pastures new. The authorities of towns subject to such terrors will find it to their advantage to encourage such warnings by the establishment of local observatories, for it is very certain that in the future, tourists will refuse to visit places unprotected by such means.

Accounts of a still more alarming catastrophe come from Java. On Sunday the 26th of August, a violent eruption took place in the volcanic island of Krakatoa, situated in the Sunda Straits, which separate the large islands of Java and Sumatra. The eruption continued into the following day, with tremendous results. Some large towns have entirely disappeared; the coastline of the Straits has been so altered as not to be recognisable; and altogether the loss of life is variously estimated at from seventy-five thousand to one hundred thousand persons.

A volume has just been published by the Indian government on the subject of Bee-keeping in India, from which it appears that, for some reason or another, beehives are almost unknown in that country. The people over the greater part of the land are content with the impure honey afforded by the wild varieties of bee, and make no effort whatever to improve the yield and quality of the product by careful cultivation. But Cashmere and its neighbourhood must be mentioned as an exception to the general rule, for here bee-culture is carried to great perfection, and the simple way in which the hives are contrived and the honey gathered might even be imitated with advantage here at home. As each house is built, spaces are left in the walls of about fourteen inches diameter and two feet deep—the usual thickness of walls. Each of these cavities is lined with a mixture of mortar, clay, and chopped straw, and is closed at the end with a flat tile, which can be easily removed from the inside of the house. This is done by the householder when the time comes for removing the honey, the tile being manipulated with one hand, while the other is engaged in holding a wisp of smouldering straw, whose smoke is blown through the hive. The bees thereupon leave their home until the operation is over. The same colonies occupy the same hives generation after generation, and the honey obtained is said to be equal to that produced in any other part of the world.

The remains of what is believed to be the largest mammoth ever exhumed in America have been found by some workmen, excavating at a depth of thirteen feet from the surface, in a gravel pit at Syracuse, New York. These relics consist of a tooth twelve inches long and weighing twenty-five pounds; and of a tusk five feet long, weighing one hundred and fifty pounds. This tusk is not entire, but is supposed to have formed part of one measuring ten or eleven feet long. From the calculation of experts, it is believed

that the creature when living must have been at least fourteen feet high.

A correspondent kindly draws our attention to some researches by M. de Candolle of Geneva into the phenomena of ripple-marks formed on sand by the action of water. These markings, familiar enough to visitors to any seaside place with a sandy shore, have been produced artificially by M. de Candolle with very simple apparatus, and by acting upon fine powders suspended in water. Similar experiments may be repeated by any one by the employment of a glass basin to hold the water and pulverised material, with a sheet of glass to cover the whole, to prevent splashes. A slight to-and-fro circular motion given to the basin will cause the solid matter to form ridges radiating from a central point. It has been found that any liquid acts in a similar manner on any other liquid denser than itself; and the laws that govern the height, shape, and distance apart of the ridges are invariable, and depend on the density of the respective fluids, their depths, and the nature of the motion to which they have been subjected. M. de Candolle believes that the complete elucidation of the theory of the action of liquids upon one another will enable him to attack the problem of the nature of cell formation in plants from a new standpoint.

It is often a matter of importance to ascertain with accuracy the weight of a loaded railway truck or locomotive. This is generally done by taking the truck to be weighed to the weighing-machine, the visible part of which consists of a flat plate furnished with rails. To obviate the inconvenience represented by this course, a weighing-machine, known as 'Ehrhardt's Patent Portable Weighing Apparatus,' has been introduced, and is now in extensive use both here and on the continent. It consists of a modification of the steelyard, and is in effect a lever which can be applied to each wheel of the truck or locomotive to be weighed, lifting it completely from the rail upon which it rests. It is very exact in its work, and represents a great saving in prime cost, for no foundations are required. It has an advantage, too, over other forms of weighing-machines in showing the exact weight which each wheel has to bear. The agents are Messrs James Scott and Son, Manchester.

The old fiction that certain cities lead so surely to fortune that they may be described as being paved with the precious metals, has been realised in a certain road in Clinton County, state of New York. A contractor had undertaken to repair this road, and employed for the purpose such clinkers and refuse as a neighbouring smelting furnace conveniently afforded. Wayfarers along the improved thoroughfare soon began to notice certain glistening particles beneath their feet, which upon examination turned out to be pure silver. Inquiry into the matter showed that the ironstone used in the smelting furnace came from a mine traversed by an irregular vein of silver ore. No trouble had been taken to separate the one metal from the other, and the most valuable had been treated as waste.

An economical process of extracting sugar from beetroot molasses has for some time been secretly worked in Germany; but as probably the secret could be held no longer, the process has been

patented, and it is being adopted in various parts of the continent with great success. The value of the beetroot sugar annually imported into Britain is no less than ten thousand pounds sterling; and there seems no valid reason why the produce represented by this large sum should not be grown at home. Experiments giving satisfactory results were tried in different parts of Ireland some few years back; but capitalists did not respond, and the possibilities of beet culture have been forgotten. It would be as well to ascertain by fresh experiments whether the new process to which we have adverted will give still more hopeful results. An industry which would have a powerful effect upon the agriculture of Ireland would do more to settle the Irish question than many Acts of Parliament.

It is estimated that one-half the manufactures of San Francisco are executed by Chinese labour. In spite of the restriction placed upon Chinese immigration, the number in the Chinese colony of that town seems to have increased rather than diminished. Taking up any particular trade, they soon monopolise it, and actually impose fines upon dealers trading with other people. In this way they have secured various monopolies, including washing, the cigar-manufacture, the boot and shoe industry, and other manufactures relating to clothing. The Chinese are resolute and persevering, and owe their success to these good qualities and the scarcity of domestic servants and rapid increase of small factories. Perhaps, as partial revenge for this Chinese invasion, which of course affects many other cities of the New World besides San Francisco, the cultivation of the tea-plant is being seriously attempted in the United States; and the success of the experiments shows that it is an industry that can be profitably worked, at any rate in the South.

The Niagara rapids, where Captain Webb was drowned, were described by him, just before he made the attempt to swim through them, as 'the angriest bit of water in the world.' It is interesting to note that only three men have passed this terrible passage alive, and this was in 1861. They were on board a steam-vessel furnished with an engine of one hundred horsepower. This vessel, although specially chosen for the hazardous task, came out of the ordeal almost a wreck.

An important meeting of engineers was lately held in London, having originated in a suggestion by the Board of Trade that before regulations were made with regard to the control of steam-tramways, those most interested should have an opportunity of expressing their views upon the subject. The late accidents which have occurred where steam-motors are in use, naturally came under discussion, and rules were drawn up for their avoidance in the future. The type of engine was also an important point of discussion, for there are many already competing for public favour. It seems quite certain that in a few years' time, horses for tramway-work will be things of the past. Steam has already been adopted in various cities. In London itself, a tramcar, driven by compressed air, is running upon one route, while in other places electro-motors have been submitted to critical experiment.

Tramway-work is said to take the life out of a horse in a very short time, and for this reason alone one would wish other modes of locomotion to be speedily adopted.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

AN INTERESTING BOOK.

THE names of Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall have long been familiar in the walks of popular literature, and the latter especially gained much popularity by her *Sketches of Irish Character*. Mrs Hall died in the beginning of 1881; and Mr Hall, thus left by himself, has completed and given to the world, in two volumes (London: Bentley), an account of their literary and other experiences, under the title of *Retrospect of a Long Life, from 1815 to 1883*. To the general reader, the book presents many points of interest, the somewhat miscellaneous and almost heterogeneous nature of its contents serving perhaps as a recommendation to this class of reader rather than a drawback. There are few eminent men or women of the century but were known to Mr Hall and his clever wife, and a great mass of anecdote is here collected and woven into the narrative of the *Retrospect*. Mr Hall has in his later years become a convert to spiritualist fancies, and this has perhaps occasionally given a certain degree of distortion to his estimate of some of his contemporaries. But, upon the whole, the book is the product of an intelligent, large-hearted, benevolent man, and will not fail to attract many readers.

THE ARTIFICIAL CULTURE OF OYSTERS.

In our article on 'Oyster-culture' (page 602), we have made reference to the success of the artificial methods of culture in connection with the Portuguese oyster. This success, we are glad to say, has likewise been achieved in America. Professor Brown Goode, the United States Commissioner to the International Fisheries Exhibition, recently received a telegram from Professor Bond, United States Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries, to the effect that Mr Ryder, the embryologist of the Fish Commission, has successfully solved the problem of the culture of oysters from artificially impregnated eggs, and that on the 4th September, at the Government Station, Stockton, Maryland, there were many millions of young oysters, three-quarters of an inch in diameter, hatched from eggs artificially impregnated forty-six days before. From a single oyster, it is added, seven millions of eggs can be obtained.

DORMANT AND EXTINCT PEERAGES.

In an article on this subject, our contemporary, the *Pall Mall Budget*, gives the following interesting information:

As far as we have been able to gather with some pains from Sir Bernard Burke's pages (*Dormant and Extinct Peerages*), there have during the current century disappeared from the extant peerages of the three Kingdoms five royal dukedoms, five dukedoms, eight marquises, sixty-seven earldoms, thirty-six viscounties, and a hundred and twenty-four baronies, many of which, of course, have been created afresh, or have been superior dignities which have dropped

off from inferior dignities, with wider limitations of descent. But this, perhaps, may diminish any astonishment which might be felt at the statements made by the Ulster King-of-Arms in his preface—namely, that 'all the English dukedoms created from the institution of the order down to the commencement of the reign of Charles II. are gone, except only Norfolk and Somerset, and Cornwall, enjoyed by the Prince of Wales; that 'Winchester and Worcester—the latter now merged in the dukedom of Beaufort—are the only existing English marquises older than the reign of George III.'; and that although 'the earl's coronet was very frequently bestowed under the Henrys and the Edwards—it was the favourite distinction, besides being the oldest—yet of all the English earldoms created by the Normans, the Plantagenets, and the Tudors, eleven only remain, and of these six are merged in higher honours, the only ones giving independent designation being Shrewsbury, Derby, Huntingdon, Pembroke, and Devon.' 'The present House of Lords,' he adds, 'cannot claim among its members a single male descendant of any one of the barons who were chosen to enforce Magna Charta, or of any of the peers who are known to have fought at Agincourt, and the noble House of Wrottesley is the solitary existing family among the Lords which can boast of a male descent from a founder of the Order of the Garter.' At the same time, the descendants in the female line from all these categories of distinguished persons are extremely numerous both in and out of the House of Lords. It is well known that the people who have a legitimate descent from one or other of the Plantagenet kings Henry III., Edward I., or Edward III., are to be counted by thousands; and, as the late Lord Farnham took the trouble to show, over a hundred peers have the rarest of all 'royal descent,' that from Henry VII. and Elizabeth of York. One potent reason why so many ancient dignities—baronies, at all events—have disappeared is that, being inheritable 'in fee,' they have passed from the heirs-male, and have either fallen into abeyance among co-heiresses, or have been accumulated by the marriage of heiresses in a single line of descent.

UNCLAIMED MONEY.

In addition to the various accumulations of 'unclaimed money' mentioned in the article on that subject in a recent number of *Chambers's Journal* (page 513), there are undoubtedly very considerable sums in the hands of bankers, which have lain at the credit of their clients for many years, and remain, with few exceptions, unclaimed by the representatives. As it is a common practice for depositors to leave their pass-books for years together at their bankers—in some cases even never asking for them at all—there is in many instances no information in the possession of relatives of deceased persons, unless they happen to know of some such banking account. Any one not acquainted with the careless ways of persons of means who have deposits at banks, would hardly believe how these balances of customers are constantly accumulating. After the lapse of a few years, they are entered without particulars under one heading in the ledger, or perhaps transferred to an account in the private

ledger, away from the inspection of the younger clerks of the staff.

Those who know anything of the unclaimed amounts would not run the risk of losing their employment by giving information to any one. One such case was, however, known to the writer; for when an application was made for the amount by the parties entitled to it, the unlucky clerk who gave the information was dismissed. At one bank, many years ago, the Sundry Balances Account, as it was designated, extended over several pages of the ledger; the year when transferred, the name of the client, and the amount, being all the particulars given. Some of these balances had belonged to public Companies which were defunct; but most of them belonged to private parties deceased, and many of them were of fifty years' standing. The total of the list amounted to several thousand pounds, which sum was, on the junction of the house with another banking-house, divided among the partners, and transferred to their respective private banking accounts; the same thing being done by the other house with their list of unclaimed balances. With some banks, it is usual to have the old books cut up and sold to the manufacturing stationers in London; so that, beyond a certain date, there is really no remedy for claimants.

Besides the balances of depositors, there are in banks boxes of silver-plate and other valuables left sometimes for many years in the vaults; and it seems probable that in some cases they may remain unclaimed by descendants of the owners. When the writer on one occasion was at a bank in London on business, one of the senior cashiers told him—in confidence—that having had occasion to go into one of the vaults, he noticed an iron box labelled with the name of some old relative of one of the firm which we then represented, and that the box had been in a corner for a great many years. Permission having been obtained to force it open, it was found to contain a quantity of old documents; but whether they were of any value or not, we never ascertained.

It would be a very desirable thing if such deposits were advertised, after the lapse of a certain number of years. At anyrate, we presume that a person who could show his interest in such property could, with the aid of a solicitor, demand full particulars, and be allowed to inspect the books of the bank for that purpose.

It may be convenient for our readers to know that the material for our articles on Unclaimed Money and Crown Windfalls, which appeared in our issues of August 18th and August 25th, were culled from Mr Edward Preston's curious little book, *Unclaimed Money*, published by E. W. Allen, 4 Ave Maria Lane, London, E.C. Price one shilling.

THE USE OF SALT ON LAND.

The advantages, says an American paper, of using salt on land and in feeding all kinds of farming-stock have often been discussed, and there is enough on record to satisfy the most incredulous, and to stimulate progressive farmers most sedulously to pursue agricultural tests of this substance in every way. The usefulness of

salt in curing hay and promoting the health of our domestic animals has long been known in the United States. The ancient writers often allude to it. Pliny the naturalist seems to have known little or nothing of the use of salt in agriculture, but he was well aware of its virtue in feeding cattle. 'Herds of cattle,' says he, 'being covetous of a salt pasture, give a great deal more milk, and the same is much more agreeable in the making of cheese than where there is no such saline ground.' John Glauber, an eminent chemist of Amsterdam, who published several esteemed works on the practice of chemistry about two hundred and fifty years ago, was so thoroughly convinced of the economy of using salt as a manure, that he obtained a patent from the government of the United States of Holland for the sole disposal of the privilege of applying this valuable mineral to the barren lands in that country. Gervase Markham, a learned writer in the reigns of James I. and Charles I., who was equally noted for his skill in many foreign languages and for his knowledge of the various branches of agriculture, published a great variety of treatises on the management of land, and closed his agricultural labours by the publication of a work entitled *Markham's Farewell to Husbandry*, in which the following passage occurs: 'If you be neer unto any part of the sea-coast, thence fetch great store of the salt sand, and with it cover your ground which hath beene formerly plowed and hackt, allowing unto every acre of ground threescore or fourscore full bushels of sand, which is a very good and competent proportion; and this sand thus laid shall be very well spread and mixed among the other broken earth. And herein is to be noted that not any other sand but the salt is good or available for this purpose, because it is the brine and saltneſſe of the same which breedeth this fertility and fruitfulness in the earth, choking the growth of all weeds, and giving strength, vigour, and comfort to all kinds of grain or pulse, or any fruit of better nature.'

When it comes to the effect of salt in feeding horses, cattle, and sheep, there can be no doubt. Dr. Anderson unhesitatingly declares that there is no substance yet known which is so much relished by the whole order of graminivorous animals as common salt. The wild animals of the forest are so fond of it, that wherever they discover a bank of earth impregnated with a small portion of salt, they come to it regularly ever after to lick the saline earth—hence these spots were known in our Western country as 'salt licks.' It is also admitted by all who have tried the experiment, that salt given along with the food of domestic animals (except fowls) tends very much to promote their health and accelerate their fattening; and although some persons, who have been at a loss to account for the manner in which this stimulant could act as a nutritious substance, have affected to disregard the fact, yet no one has been able to bring the slightest show of evidence to invalidate the strong proofs which have been adduced in support of it. It is not, therefore, an extraordinary position to say that, by a proper use of common salt, the same quantity of forage might on many occasions be made to go twice as far as it could have done in feeding animals, had the salt been withheld from them.

If so, then we have here laid open to our view an easy mode of augmenting the produce of our fields to an amazing extent; for if the same quantity of forage can be made to go, not twice as far, but one-twentieth part only farther than it now does, it would be the same thing as adding one-twentieth part to the aggregate produce of meat from domestic animals throughout the whole country. We are of the opinion that the salting given to corn fodder, cut and packed in cellars, has much to do in rendering it palatable.

Sir John Sinclair, one of the foremost agricultural writers of his or any other age, advocated the use of salt for the three following reasons: (1) That by allowing the sheep to lick it, the rot was effectually prevented; (2) that his cattle, to whom lumps of it were given to lick, were thereby protected from infectious disorders; and the cows, being thus rendered more healthy, and being induced to take a greater quantity of liquid, gave more milk; and (3) that a small quantity pounded was found very beneficial to horses when new oats were given them, if the oats were at all moist.

N I G H T.

DARK shadow 'twixt to-morrow morn and me!—
If but a shadow, my heart shrinks from thee;
If but a heavy gloom on vale and height;
If but a black shroud for the sun's sweet light,
Earth like his widow lying love-forgot—

O Night, I love thee not!

If but a passage to the coming day;
If but a waiting for the morning ray;
If but a silence, when the solemn hush
Is moved, as if the wings of angels rush
Over the babies with a cradle-song—

O Night, I did thee wrong!

If but a respite from the toil of day;
If but a pause, to ponder on the way;
If but a time to shut the eyelids tight,
Wrestling with evil in a deadly fight;
If but a pillow where white wings descend—

O Night, thou art my friend!

If but a time of promise of the Far;
If but a waiting for the morning star;
If but dreams brightening of a gorgeous morn,
Where life and love and joy are newly born;
If but a yearning for eternal light—

Thou teachest well, O Night!

K. S.

The Conductor of CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL begs to direct the attention of CONTRIBUTORS to the following notice:

1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'

2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

3d. MANUSCRIPTS should bear the author's full *Christian* name, Surname, and Address, legibly written; and should be written on white (not blue) paper, and on one side of the leaf only.

4th. Offerings of Verse should invariably be accompanied by a stamped and directed envelope.

If the above rules are complied with, the Editor will do his best to insure the safe return of ineligible papers.

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